

The Home-Coming of the Nation Without a Home

THE Jewish question is bound in one way or another to come before the peace conference, not in one way or another, but in all ways. If it be true that the Jewish question is a moral barometer, then the conference cannot decently evade the responsibility of meeting and solving those interwoven questions which together are involved in the Jewish status.

The peace conference of 1919 will differ from the peace conference of 1878 in that no such dazzlingly gifted Jew as was Disraeli is dominant in its councils—though Disraeli's service to his people was one of good will rather than of achievement. Self-revering Jews such as the writer hold it to be the happiest augury that the attitude of the peace conference to the Jew will be determined not by the power of any outstanding Jewish personality but by the moral necessities alike of the Jewish problem and the professed purposes of the conference itself.

The Jews To-day

The Jews are at one and the same time more and less happily circumstanced in 1919 than in 1878. More happily in that the world has in part, because of the war and the things for which the war was fought, reached higher levels of international principle and practice than those which governed the Bismarck dominated procedure of 1878. More happily because the dominant powers of 1918 are not the Germanic nations which, because of the nimbus of the 1871 triumph, were still in the ascendant in 1878, but the two English speaking commonwealths and the two Latin democracies which have brought to a triumphant close man's supreme struggle for freedom.

Less happily, on the other hand, are Jews circumstanced to-day because Russia, land rather than home of half of the world's Jewry of yesterday, is gone for a time in any event, and because of its temporary—it must not be permanent—decline, the great Jewry of Russia is broken up into a series of Jewish fragments which find it impossible to speak with one voice. Less happily, yet again, because the centre of the world's unrest is that Eastern Europe which includes nearly two-thirds of the Jewish people, so that it is tragedy upon tragedy for the Jew that they whose homes and hearths were oftentimes scourged by the ravages of German-Russian alternations of victory and defeat still find themselves at the centre of a storm zone which an in-

Why the Recovery of Palestine Is of Special Significance to the Jews, Though Only Some of Them Care to Go There—Judah's Place at the Peace Table.

By Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

finite complexity of international circumstance makes it all but impossible to succor.

The American Jew's Burden

This helplessness of storm-swept Eastern Jewry means that the heaviest share of the burden of world-Israel must be borne by the American Jew. It is good that the American Jew is able and ready to bear the burden, as a result of the growth not only of the Jewish community in American life but of its deepening consciousness of responsibility for the Jewish status the world over. American Israel has risen to the high occasion which summons it not merely to give unstintingly of its material resources, but of that capacity for leadership which the needs of a generation of stress and turmoil have evoked from out its life. Brandeis and Mack, Morgenthau and the Strauses, Marshall, Elkus, Frankfurter are the names that represent the higher statesmanship of the Jewish people.

Last of all, and yet perhaps most important of all among the happily furthering circumstances of the Jew in relation to the peace conference, is the truth that the most significant Jewish community in the world to-day is a part of that nation which is become most potent in world councils and most eager to inaugurate the era of reparation to the Jew in the only form in which the Jew demands reparation for centuries of wrong and hurt by him endured—namely, justice. It is a little less than miraculous conjuncture of events that, in part because of its finely loyal and passionately devoted Jewish population, the American people is bent as no nation has ever before been bent upon writing into the code of the world's practice the statute and status of justice, even-handed and changeless, to the Jew.

Honoring witness to the reality of world-

progress is to be found in the fact that the Jewish question need not be put by Jews and yet must be answered by the peace conference. For one thing, as already indicated, half of the thirteen or fourteen millions of Jews dwell in that East-European zone which was swept by war a dozen times and now is ravaged yet again by those lesser wars which are not lesser in their hurt to their victims. The conference may not adjourn without taking into account and firmly grappling with the difficulties of an unlocalized Balkan problem, the Jewish question. Some there are at the peace conference who are utilizing the facts of the Bolshevik terror in order to excite the wrath of Europe assembled in Paris against Jews and thus to avert a solution just and equitable of the Jewish question. But statesmen at Paris worthy of the name understand that Bolshevism is not a Jewish phenomenon but a Russian symptom of European unrest, and that, though a handful of Jewish renegades led by Trotsky are among the leaders in Bolshevik counsel, the great mass of Russian Jews are the bitter and implacable foes of Bolshevism, even as they were great-hearted and gloriously forgiving in their loyalty to the Russia which had long scourged them.

Order Out of Chaos

As far as I could gather from the general temper of the peace conference and learn from its leading personalities, English, French and American, there is a general resolve to do what in the conference lies to bring order out of the Jewish chaos; and, better yet, to make it possible for Jews everywhere and under all circumstances to reorder Jewish affairs.

There is nothing millennial in the temper of the conference which moves to deal



Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

justly by the Jew. It so happens—and the happening is far from fortuitous—that Jewish claims have long been identical with and anticipative of Allied aims and are therefore wholly conformable to the purposes of the peace conference. Thus, the first of the inevitable demands of the Jew, submitted to the conference, is no demand at all, but merely the insistence that as the Jew is dealt with and as he has long fared

in the four great victorious lands, so shall he be dealt with among all nations that are to become signatories of the peace pact. In other words, that which is the right, not privilege, of the Jew in lands victorious shall be exacted on behalf of the Jew in all lands which ask to be included within the pale of international peace and brotherhood.

It is the more necessary for the peace conference to insist upon including equality of status for the Jew in the code of all nations which are to be admitted into the world covenant because it was in the defeated lands that, save for Russia and Rumania, prior to the war, the Jew fared worst. Two ugly and loathsome things found their birth or rebirth in Central European lands—militarism and anti-Semitism. The connection is not a matter of chance, for militarism, unchallenged and triumphant, is bound to breed just such anti-social phenomena as anti-Semitism. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that a league, or the league, of nations would suffer any member to continue those practices of inequity and discrimination which are nothing more than the legal codification and incorporation of the spirit of anti-Semitism.

The Jews and the League

In truth, it had been thought by some of those with whom I fell to my lot to deal among the representatives of the governments of England, France and America that a clause in the constitution of the league would so stipulate against discriminatory status and practice on religious and racial grounds as to insure the unalterable equality of status, political, civil, religious, of Jews in all lands that seek admittance with-

in the family of nations aiming to do justice within and without their borders. It remains the writer's confident hope that the written covenant of the league will not fail to make mandatory and inviolable in all lands that charter of equality which the Allied nations have inscribed upon their own statute books.

A second problem must be faced by the conference and this, like the foregoing, is not essentially a Jewish problem, though it have a Jewish aspect. National self-determination versus Prussian domination was the issue of the war. Prussianism spelt for the world the terror of external domination. Any domination, however imposed from without, will long and justly be branded as Prussianism. National self-determination is one of the goals of the peace conference, but is not wholly attainable in those lands which, as a result of the flux of centuries of migration, conquest, permeation, are made up of diverse national and racial units, inextricably bound up with one another within the limits of territorial sovereignty.

The Question of Palestine

The unliberated Poland of yesterday vainly strove for a century to achieve those minority rights which Russia, Germany and Austria were a unit in withholding from their Polish elements of population. Despite this appalling injustice, the indomitable Polish spirit maintained alive and unbroken the tradition and the genius of Polish nationality. A score of such (Polish) minorities made up of other racial and national units will be found among the reconstituted nations of the morrow. What Poland justly asked the world of nations must in justice grant to every racial group or minority within its own life. Because I am a friend of Poland and rejoice in the too long deferred revival of the Polish nation, I de-

voutly hope that Poland will be guided and deterred by the example of her century-long oppressors and will, not only because of conference mandate, but because of the compulsion of her own tragic experience, grant to the very considerable Jewish minority within the Polish republic that measure of self-determination which is wholly compatible with national loyalty and makes in truth for the strongest federation of racially and religiously varying elements.

The third Jewish question before the peace conference is the question of Palestine. The world, save for a handful of American Jews, knows that the spirit of Jewish nationality has never ceased to be, though Roman invader expropriated the Jew from his national home nearly nineteen hundred years ago. The question before the Peace Conference is not whether there shall be a Jewish Palestine, but what form that Jewish Palestine shall take politically, and how best it can be developed from within and safeguarded from without. Somewhere the heart of men turns to Great Britain and summons the British government and people to take upon themselves the burden of trusteeship under a league of nations for a Jewish Palestine. Britain does not seek such trusteeship, but the will of the nations is fixed upon such consummation of the world's faith touching the ancient home of the Jew, that it may again become a homeland of the Jewish people under those inviolable guarantees of the league of nations, which Britain may be counted upon to secure.

A Jewish Palestine means that Jews are to be enabled at the earliest possible moment to lay the foundations of a Jewish commonwealth under the fostering and sheltering, (and may I not say reparative?) guardianship of the league of nations. The future of the Jewish commonwealth the world cannot shape. The event must rest in the hands of the Jewish people. It remains to be seen whether, as we have long believed, the Jews will be equal to the opportunity not merely of physical reestablishment in their ancient land, but of spiritually recreating the best and noblest in Jewish life and tradition. It will be not the least of the glories of the peace conference to have framed the charter of hope for the Jewish people, to have at one and the same time proclaimed to the Jew freedom in all lands, and above all freedom to rebuild the waste places and to make the Holy Land of an earlier day rich with the fulfillment of prophetic promises of justice and righteousness between man and man.

(Copyright, 1919, Otto F. Wood.)

Puzzle: How to Haul the United States for a Nickel

By Richard Hoadley Tingley

IT SEEMS like a paradoxical state that the traction lines serving the most densely populated section of the United States should be unable to earn a living.

The paradox is still further accentuated when account is taken of the fact that the patrons of these lines are daily compelled to ride under conditions of "high density compression" to which human beings never should be subjected. "Straphangers" is the name that used to be applied to the unfortunate riders on the surface, the elevated and the subway lines of New York. The name is no longer applicable, since, during the "rush" hours at least, one cannot get near enough to a strap to hang to it; indeed, straps have almost ceased to be a necessity, for, in the density of compression, one needs no other support than that afforded by the other unfortunates who surround him.

Mr. Shonts further adds to the difficulty when he states, as he has recently stated in his "Subway Sun," that the subway lines were designed at the start to carry 400,000 passengers a day, and that now (this was before the "H" system was put into operation last summer) they are carrying 1,200,000 people daily. This increase in business having been brought about without materially increasing the mileage, the question naturally presents itself: "If the subways could make money (and they did) by carrying 400,000 people a day, why cannot they now live while carrying 1,200,000 people a day?"

The Other Side Of the Story

In order to carry these 1,200,000 people a day over lines originally built to carry but a third of the number the Interborough has been compelled to spend enormous sums of money on equipment, on additional power plant installations, on lengthening out platforms at nearly every station, and in many other ways, including transportation anomaly, the Forty-second Street "shuttle."

Furthermore, the five-cent fare of the time when 400,000 people daily were being carried is worth but about two or two and a half cents in purchasing power now. In no city in the country (I think I am safe in making this assertion) can a passenger ride so many miles, if he chooses, for a single fare, as on the transportation lines of New York City. The money in the traction business is in the short riders and a very large proportion of the elevated and subway patrons are long riders.

These are some of the elements of the proportion that nobody seems able to work out. No one has ever been able to solve, to the satisfaction of everybody, the value of the unknown quantity; the x of the equation.

There are, however, a few points that stand out distinctly and must be recognized. If we can believe what Mr. Shonts says, the patrons of these lines must give more money for the privilege of "sardining" themselves into their cars, or the companies he represents will surely follow the footsteps of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit and take on a new manager in the person of a receiver. And if we can believe what Mayor Hylan and other members of the Board of Estimate say, the city will surely take over and operate the lines if Mr. Shonts abandons his contracts. In either case it means an increase in fare, for neither a receiver nor a municipal manager will be able to dodge the issue.

But so far as any improvement in service or in riding conditions is concerned

little relief can be expected from any quarter. So long as Manhattan Island continues to be so much longer than it is wide, and so long as New York people all insist upon travelling in the same direction at the same time, there is only one way by which the intolerable riding conditions can be improved, and that is by building duplicate, parallel lines of both elevated and subway.

Troubles of the Out-of-Town Traction

New York but represents in an exaggerated way the difficulties experienced by other traction companies the country over. A favorite theme of George Randolph Chester, when exploiting the activities of his creation, Mr. Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford, was the manipulation of the trolley franchise. Chester chose this industry in order to display the financial genius of his puppet because, as everybody knows, there was money to be made in the building and operation of electric railroads and the field offered, perhaps, more fruitful possibilities than any other.

But times have changed, and, as everybody knows, there is no longer any money to be made in street railroading, and Mr. Chester has chosen different avenues of industry in which to exploit the talents of his Wallingford.

After a stiff fight, covering many lean years in which the chief thought of the managers of electric railway properties has been to avoid going to the wall, they have finally been obliged to surrender to the inevitable. They might, perhaps, have been able to weather the storm and come out with a skin not too severely lacerated had not too many adverse conditions conspired in ever-increasing number and intensity to keep them down. As it was, however, with no relief in sight, with the hard-hearted public service commissioners becoming more hardened of heart each year, with fixed obligations maturing, and with a continued inability to exercise any control over either their income or their outgo, they have given up the struggle; they have invited municipal or public purchase of the properties that could no longer be profitably managed under private ownership.

It is safe to say that there is not a member of the American Railways Association, nor an officer or manager of any privately owned traction company in the United States, that indorses the principle of public ownership of utilities properties. Any one of these men, if asked, could, no doubt, point out to you the most cogent reasons why such properties should not be owned and operated by the public. They could and would give you reasons based on theoretical and economic grounds that would be all-convincing. They could go back and quote from the early authorities on political economy, Adam Smith and others, and could prove to you by the principles laid down by them that, for political reasons if for no other, the public ownership of utilities properties could not succeed. They could quote to you from the practical experiences of something more than 200 public utilities properties now municipally owned and operated, and could prove to you by exact facts and figures that these are all failures.

Notwithstanding all this, at a recent meeting of the American Railways Association, at which upward of five hundred members were present, resolutions were introduced and passed recommending that traction managers throughout the country "lend all possible aid in the promotion of legislation necessary by public authority to bring about public ownership of all electric railway lines," and to "arrange for such terms of payment as could conveniently accord with the financial limitations of present state laws." It was pointed out by one of the members that cost of operation has prevented practically all electric railway lines from earning on their investment, this condition being accentuated by the fact that traction lines are accorded the least amount of public sympathy. "The remedy for these conditions is public ownership," said Richard McCulloch, president of the United Railways of St. Louis. "Under present conditions local franchises are valueless."

It has taken several years to bring about this change of heart in the traction men; several years of intensive struggle in an effort to live under the old conditions,

hoping against hope that the ban would be lifted and that they would be permitted to perform the functions for which they were created in a manner satisfactory to themselves, the public and their stockholders. It is a wise man, however, who knows when he is beaten, and the electric railroader, taken in the abstract, is a wise man. He now seeks to "get out from under" before the final crash comes. He seeks to unload his property on the public that has been clamoring so long to get possession of it, and to transfer to it the burden of ownership and operation of that which is no longer profitable. The traction owner does this in no spirit of vindictiveness, but on the theory that the public itself is responsible for the pitiable condition in which the average traction property now finds itself; that the public wants to own and operate the properties so as to demonstrate that it can do so in a much better and cheaper manner than any private owner can; and he is perfectly willing to let the public try.

Depreciated to Vanishing Point

The electric railroader manager knows a thing or two about traction affairs that the public, all of it at any rate, doesn't know. He knows that if all the capital stock (which carries with it the franchise rights) of almost any electric railroad in the United States were presented to him, or to you or me, as a free gift, he, or you, or I could not afford to accept it. We could not afford to accept a gift that carries with it such grave responsibilities. This applies to the properties operating in many of our largest cities as well as in smaller communities. It is these responsibilities that the traction men are now perfectly willing to place upon the broad shoulders of the public—and the public is, in its ignorance, clamoring to accept them.

What a change since the palmy days of Mr. G. R. Q. Wallingford when his chief occupation consisted in exploiting high finance in trolleys!

In a fight to preserve for itself a "place in the sun" to which the importance of

the industry seems to entitle it, the electric railway interests have organized, and through their National Committee on Public Utilities Conditions have been doing yeoman's work. The results accomplished have, however, been disappointing. They have found it impossible to arouse any great amount of sympathy for their condition. Between traction managers and the public there has always been distrust, and it will take more than the special pleadings of the publicity bureaus of the former, however adroitly put forward, to convince the latter that there is anything really serious the matter with the patient.

Not Wholly Due to War Conditions

It cannot be said that conditions arising out of war are wholly responsible for the plight in which nearly all public utilities properties, especially the tractions, now find themselves. Prior to the time when the United States declared Germany to be its enemy the cost of labor and materials had been steadily mounting. Managers of these properties throughout the country began to marshal their facts and to appear before their regulatory bodies in appeals for relief. But the regulatory bodies, the public service commissions, seemed to be in a quandary. They did not know how to act. The impression prevailed among them that they were created, not for the purpose of granting relief to companies under their jurisdiction should relief seem necessary, but for the sole purpose of guarding the interests of the public against those of the utilities properties. They did not seem to realize that their duties might be retroactive; they were a constituted body to keep these properties down, not to help raise them up—out of trouble. In their quandary valuations and endless legal proceedings were resorted to, with a result that, except in a limited sense, the tractions obtained little relief at their hands. In most cases fares, rates of taxation, transfer privileges, apportionment of cost of street improvements, etc., were fixed by contract long ago, by the terms of the municipal or state franchise under which

the companies operated, and could not be lightly altered.

Appeals to Washington For Relief

Failing of substantial relief at home, appeal was made to the Federal authorities. The Federal Finance Corporation had, in the mean time, been formed for the purpose of lending governmental financial assistance to industries affected by war conditions. Through its National Committee on Public Utilities Conditions appeal was made to this source in order to obtain funds to meet maturing obligations. Up to the present time, however, although both President Wilson and John Skelton Williams, Controller of the Currency, and other prominent government officials all openly agree that these useful industries should not be permitted to lack substantial aid, nothing substantial has happened.

Before the Committee on Finance of the United States Senate appeared, last September, Philip H. Gadsden, chairman of the National Committee on Public Utilities Conditions, in an appeal for the relief of the industries he represented. These industries, he stated, represent \$10,000,000,000 in real invested capital with annual gross receipts amounting to \$1,500,000,000. Although his able presentation of the case fell upon apparently sympathetic ears, if one may judge from the character of the questions that were asked by the Senators, nothing has happened.

Bolled down into a brief analysis, there is no great difficulty in pointing out the cause of the trouble in which the electric railway industry now finds itself. It is briefly this: While the price of everything used by the railways, including labor, has advanced from 50 per cent to 400 per cent, the price of a trolley ride has remained fixed at five cents; the same as it was ten or twenty years ago. Five cents of the old time is equivalent to but two, or two and a half, cents of to-day. With the rapid advance of commodity prices other industries have been able to pass the obligation along to the consumer. Not so the trolley company. If the five cent fare was a just and equitable price to pay

for a trolley ride ten years ago it certainly is not so now; and herein lies the seat of the trouble with the tractions. It is easier, however, to point out the trouble than the remedy; but the remedy must certainly be found, much as you and I would dislike to dig down into our pockets for that extra cent, or two, or three.

The experience, however, of some of the lines that have been given permission to increase the fare is not reassuring. On short hauls (and it is in short hauls that the money is made in transportation) it has been found that former riders now become walkers—and save their money. But this condition can never happen in New York.

The Importance of the Industry

Everybody knows that the electric railways are one of the most essential adjuncts to our modern civilization and manner of life. They have developed a suburban life that would have to be entirely recast should their lines be abandoned.

The members of a community served by a given electric railway seldom, to any great extent, are the owners of its stocks and bonds. Their chief interest, therefore, is in the efficiency of the transportation it affords. Under these circumstances it would seem that the interests of the community and the operating company ought to be identical; that they should both work in harmony, to their mutual good. But this is what does not happen. Few instances have yet been recorded where a feeling of cordiality exists between these two factions. The cat and the dog often get along better together than do the representatives of these two interests. I will not attempt to go into the "why" of this feeling, but that antagonism, always more or less acute, always exists none will, I think, deny. This is one of the reasons why electric railways all over the country are in a bad way, but there are other reasons as well.

What of the Future?

The lines of electric railway, as we know them, have filled a certain gap in the economic development of urban and interurban transportation. That the system has its drawbacks none will deny. It is heavy, cumbersome, inelastic, costly of construction and maintenance, but it is the best we know. The trolley car is drafty, usually crowded, stuffy, smelly, but it gets us there. We should remember, however, that the trolley was born before the advent of the automobile, with its smooth running pneumatic tires, had pampered us into the real luxury of riding.

But who can say that the trolley is here to stay? That it will outlast another generation? In this age of progress almost anything in the way of an innovation may be possible. Some of the brightest minds in the country are seeking a substitute. Will it be the airplane, or some modified form of the jitney, or something else? Who can tell?

In the mean time, under the terms of the surrender, it remains to be seen what will happen to that form of transportation which we now have. Will the terms of the surrender be accepted and will the public rise to the occasion and take over what there is left of these hard pressed tractions (including their obligations)?

Or will matters drift along, the properties gradually going into receivership, bankruptcy and abandonment?

